

REMARKS

Claims 10-20 have previously been canceled. Claims 1 and 6 have been amended. Support for the proposed amendments may be found between line 12 on page 12 and line 20 on page 13 of the Patent Application and in Figure 5. No new matter has been added. Thus, claims 1-9 are pending in the present application. A Request for Continued Examination has been filed with the present response. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner enter and consider the proposed amendments.

In the Office Action, claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Nara (U.S. Patent No. 6,061,823). The Examiner's remaining rejections are respectfully traversed.

Nara describes a technique for selectively inverting bits in a sequence based upon a reliability measure associated with each bit. However, Nara is concerned with analyzing individual bits in a sequence and does not describe or suggest techniques for distinguishing between sequences of bits that have the same maximum likelihood value. Accordingly, Nara fails to teach or suggest selecting for output one of a plurality of sequences of bits that are determined to have a maximum likelihood based on a plurality of soft symbol metrics for a data block, as set forth in independent claim 1. Nara is also completely silent with regard to weights that may be determined based upon the number of non-zero bits in the sequence and therefore also fails to describe or suggest that the selected sequence has a weight (determined by a number of non-zero bits in the sequence) that is greater than a minimum weight for the plurality of sequences, as also set forth in independent claim 1.

For at least the aforementioned reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is not anticipated by Nara and request that the Examiner's rejections of claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn.

In the Office Action, claims 6-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Chen (U.S. Patent No. 5,586,128). The Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

Chen describes randomly selecting one of a plurality of sequences when each of the sequences in the plurality of sequences has the same maximum likelihood. However, Chen is completely silent with regard to weights that may be determined based upon the number of non-zero bits in the sequence and therefore also fails to describe or suggest that the selected sequence has a weight (determined by a number of non-zero bits in the sequence) that is greater than a minimum weight for the plurality of sequences, as set forth in independent claim 6. Furthermore, Chen fails to teach or suggest selecting the sequence randomly from a plurality of sequences that all have the same weight, as set forth in independent claim 6.

For at least the aforementioned reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is not anticipated by Chen and request that the Examiner's rejections of claims 6-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn.

For the aforementioned reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all claims pending in the present application are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (713) 934-4052 with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Respectfully submitted,

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/Mark W. Sincell/

Mark W. Sincell, Ph.D.

Reg. No. 52,226

Williams Morgan & Amerson, P.C.

10333 Richmond Avenue, Suite 1100

Houston, TX 77042

(713) 934-7000

(713) 934-7011 (Fax)

AGENT FOR APPLICANTS